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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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REPORT

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COUNTRY	USSR	DATE DISTR.	16 July 1948
SUBJECT	Fish Industry	NO. OF PAGES	5
PLACE ACQUIRED	USSR	NO. OF ENCLS. (LISTED BELOW)	
DATE OF INFORMATION	1947	SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.	

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION FOR THE RESEARCH USE OF TRAINED INTELLIGENCE ANALYSTS

SOURCE Russian periodical, Rybnoye Khozyaystvo, Vol XXIII, No 11, November 1947. (FDB Per Ab 13G41 -- Translation specifically requested.)

THIRTY YEARS OF PROGRESS IN THE SOVIET FISH-PROCESSING INDUSTRY

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The prerevolutionary fish industry could not supply the needs of the country even in salted fish. In 1913, 320,000 tons of salted fish (including 283,000 tons of herring) and 27,000 tons of fresh fish were imported into Russia from abroad. The only type of fish-processing enterprise in Tsarist Russia was the fishery which had no machinery whatever. Types of fish-handling enterprises in different regions varied from the earlier simple platform, sometimes even without a shed, to the emergence of concrete stalls, but fish-processing technology remained uniformly primitive. The entire simple assortment of fish commodities, including frozen fish prepared by means of natural cold or ice and salt, was processed in such enterprises. Even such valuable raw fish as the sturgeon, salmon, and whitefish were, in the majority of cases, processed by salting, mainly by primitive complete or partial salting. Such enterprises as the six refrigeration plants (all in the Caspian basin) and the hand-operated canning works on the Ob' and along the Baltic were the very rare exceptions. A few small salmon canneries in the Far East were in fact appendages to the Japanese fish-canning industry in treaty waters.

The prerequisites for solving these tasks [to increase production and improve quality and variety] were first provided by the success of the Stalin Five-Year Plan for industrialization which made it possible to provide the fish industry with modern machinery, without which it would have been impossible to develop refrigeration, canning, and hy-

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product processing, or to mechanize the extraction and transport of raw materials.

The prerequisites for solving the two specified tasks were provided, secondly, by the success of the Stalin policy of collectivization. The large-scale collective fisheries, together with the State fishing industry, have solved the problem of supplying the fish-processing industry with an ever-increasing quantity of raw materials.

With what results then does the Soviet fish-processing industry approach the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution?

The fish-processing industry has been provided with an efficient technical basis. The most important achievement is the wide introduction of refrigeration in the processing of fish.

At the beginning of the Great Patriotic War the fish industry possessed extensive refrigeration facilities, consisting of 64 refrigerators and ice plants distributed in every region of the Soviet Union in which there was a fish industry. Regions which previously had not produced frozen goods (Far East) or produced them in a limited quantity in winter only (Azov-Black Sea, Aral Sea) were provided during the years of the Stalin Five-Year Plan with a complete technical base for artifical refrigeration and began the mass production of frozen fish goods not only in winter but during the whole year. In addition to permanent refrigeration plants, a refrigerator fleet, designed both for the production and transportation of frozen goods, was created in the Far East, Murmansk, Ob', and Volga-Caspian regions. This fleet is especially important in the Far East. It has become possible to deliver frozen fish goods and delicacies into the interior from the remotest regions of this extensive basin.

There was a multifold increase, in comparison with prerevolutionary standards, in the preparation of natural ice (in recent years as much as 2 million tons were prepared annually in some of the southern basins alone). The fish-processing industry also is now able to use artificial ice, which has indisputable advantages over natural ice both from a hygienic and a technological point of view. Plants for the production of artificial ice were set up in the Azov-Black Sea basin and in the South Caspian.

Refrigerators for storage of fish goods in the regions where they are consumed have also been built, among them the large refrigerator near Moscow.

Of the entire refrigeration facilities available to the fish industry at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, 83.5 percent of the capacity of freezing units, 81.8 percent of the simultaneous capacity of all storage compartments, and 79.4 percent of the capacity of ice plants had been set up in enterprises constructed after the Great October Revolution. Prerevolutionary refrigerators were radically reconstructed with improved freezing techniques, increased productivity of freezing units, and enlarged storage-compartment capacity.

(It is extremely difficult to compare the volume of production of frozen and refrigerated goods with the prerevolutionary level, since there is no corresponding data for 1913. Using the 1913 figures for railway transport (although the latter includes imported goods) as a basis, the production of frozen and refrigerated goods in 1939 rose 154 percent in comparison with 1913.)

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The production of fillets, the latest type of fish product, is closely connected with the use of artificial ice. The Soviet fish-processing industry has completely mastered the production of fillets (from codfish in Murmansk, from "chastikovaya" ["chastik" or "chastikovaya ryba" is an industrial name for fish grouped together by their relation to different species, including pike-perch, bream, carp, and pike] and sturgeon in the southern basins), requiring highly developed production techniques and equipment.

The progress achieved in the fish-canning industry is no less significant. Whereas almost 90 percent of the fish-refrigeration facilities were constructed during the Soviet regime, the entire fish-canning industry was created after the Great October Revolution. During the years of the Stalin Five-Year Plans, every one of our fish basins was provided with an efficient, well-equipped cannery. Among these is the giant of the fish-canning industry, the cannery of the Astrakhan' Fish Combine imeni A. I. Mikoyan. In capacity this plant has no equal in the world.

The creation of an extensive network of fish-canneries obviously has great significance for the national economy. It enabled even regions such as Kamchatka, Sakhalin, Primor'ye and Lower Amur, Aral Sea and Balkhash, the lower Ob' and European Zapolyar'ye (Transarctica), which are remote from centers of consumption, to process the highly valuable locally obtained raw fish. Tens of millions of cans of excellent and varied canned goods were produced, whereas 30 years before, the salmon and whitefish caught in these regions were treated almost without exception by partial salting.

Canning has become the largest branch of the Soviet fish-processing industry. The production of canned fish in recent years was not only 15 to 16 times greater than the prerevolutionary production, but was at least 1½ times greater than the total canning of Tsarist Russia.

The assortment of canned fish produced in the USSR includes hundreds of types. It is far more complete and varied than the American assortment. In the USA, 90 percent of all canned-fish products is of only four kinds: salmon, sardine, tuna, and mackerel. In the USSR there are 11 kinds: "chastikovye," salmon, sprat (kil'ka), sardine, red fish, goby, sprat (shprut), codfish, whitefish, herring, and flatfish. Whereas in 1934 only 5.6 percent of our canned-fish production was of the most expensive canned fish in oil, in 1939 the proportion rose to 12.3 percent of all canned-fish production. The output of canned goods in small containers and in oval and square cans has also increased continually.

The proportion of salted goods in the assortment of Soviet fish products decreased as a result of the increased production of refrigerated and frozen commodities and canned goods. Not only was there a relative decrease in the quantity of salted fish production, but also a great improvement in the quality. The crude and primitive method of salting which predominated in the fish industry in Tsarist times was completely replaced by improved methods which made possible fish staples and delicacies of incomparably higher quality. We have developed and achieved the production on a significant scale of slightly salted herring and sardine and also of delicately salted salmon goods. "Vobla-kolodka" [a type of Caspian roach], which was formerly put out as a highly salted product, is now prepared in the form of a slightly salted, semifinished product for subsequent curing. There has been a great improvement in the salting of anchovy and an extensive development in the production of marinated herring. The volume of production of marinated products (including that of the "Glavrybsbyta" enterprises

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grew 10.5 times during the 8 years preceding the Great Patriotic War.

The by-products industry, which has the task of utilizing the inedible waste products from dressing fish (primarily during canning and fillet production), was set up completely during the years of Soviet power. Soviet fish by-product production differs radically from that in capitalist countries, where (primarily in the USA) they wastefully use valuable food raw material for the production of fish meal and oil. Our by-products production is set up not only in enterprises on shore but also on the trawlers where the waste from dressing the catch is used for fish meal. In capitalist countries this waste is thrown overboard.

Our production of fish oil (of all sorts) rose 89 percent in the 8 years prior to the Great Patriotic War, the production of meal and fertilizer rose to 125 percent, of which the proportion of meal reached 85-90 percent and of fertilizer only 10-15 percent.

The importance of medicinal oil is well known. In prerevolutionary Russia, when there was little consumption of this oil, it was imported from Norway and home production was insignificant. The consumption of medicinal oil developed extensively during the years of Soviet power, and the demand for it is met almost exclusively by home production which has been set up in many fish basins of the USSR.

Oil-processing plants were set up during the years of Soviet power in the North, Far East, Caspian, and Black Sea areas to process hundreds of thousands of head of sea mammals: seals ("tyulen'" and "nerpa"), dolphins, white grampuses, and others. A Soviet deep-sea whale fishery was set up and is now operating in the Antarctic, yielding much oil, meal, and canned goods from whale meat.

Such an assortment of cured, marinated, dried, and ready-to-cook fish products were available in prerevolutionary Russia only to a narrow circle of consumers mainly in the large cities. The scale of production of these products was therefore insignificant. The rapid rise in the standard of living of the Soviet people, together with the increased demand for a specified assortment, made necessary the construction of a complete system of related fish-processing enterprises in areas of consumption. There were nearly 120 such enterprises by the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. During the last few years production of marinated products has increased 4.5 times, of cured products almost 11 times, of dried products 3.5 times, and of ready-to-cook fish almost 3 times. More than one fifth of the marketable stock of edible fish products was treated in centers of consumption by auxiliary processing (preparing fish to be cooked, curing, etc.) to improve the flavor and nutritional value. All the chief centers of consumption were reached by the system of such enterprises. Among these we must mention the Kolomenskiy Fish-Processing Combine (near Moscow), which was put into operation in 1938-1939, with an output of a very large assortment of ready-to-cook fish and delicatessen goods, and which is equipped with all the improvements developed by modern techniques of fish processing. No other country in the world has an enterprise equal in scale and technical level of production.

Technical reconstruction and maximum installation of machinery radically changed the nature of fish-processing enterprises. The prerevolutionary fish-handling enterprise was replaced by the fish plant. At the same time, a new type of fish-processing enterprise was developed -- the fish combine, which includes all important types of processing and also provides for a complex utilization

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of raw material. The capitalist fish industry does not know of this system of combines, which is practicable only in a socialist country.

One of the most important achievements in the Soviet fish industry is the creation of a permanent staff of workers and the introduction of engineers and technicians into production. Thanks to this, the continuous increase in labor efficiency and the best adaptation of that technique which the socialist government provided for the fish-processing industry are being maintained. This permanent personnel has created a basis for the growth of a stakhanovite movement in the fish-processing industry which permits a reevaluation of the capacity of these enterprises. This capacity often has proved to be greater than was planned.

As a result of the radical reconstruction of the fish-processing industry the assortment of fish goods changed completely. Whereas the most modern methods of processing (refrigeration, freezing, canning, etc.) provided no more than 15 percent of all prepared products before the Great October Revolution, they now provide at least 50 percent of all prepared products.

The technical reconstruction of the fish-processing industry accomplished during the years of the Stalin Five-Year Plans allowed it to pass the unprecedented test of the years of the Great Patriotic War with honor. The fish industry successfully supplied the front and the rear areas with the necessary fish goods throughout a very severe military situation, sometimes in close proximity to the front, even during the temporary capture of a number of our country's fishing regions by the enemy, and when it was necessary to transfer some fish-processing enterprises to the East.

The victorious conclusion of the Great Patriotic War permitted our country to return to the course of constructive peacetime work. The new Stalin Five-Year Plan provides for the restoration of the prewar level of industry and agriculture and, after this, the surpassing of this level.

The first 2 years of the new Stalin Five-Year Plan are evidence of the significant progress in the restoration of those parts of the fish-processing industry destroyed by the fascist occupation. Enterprises of the Azov-Black Sea basin, which were completely destroyed by the German usurpers, are again producing hundreds of thousands of centners of fish goods, among them an ever-increasing quantity of fresh, frozen, and cured fish. The fish-processing enterprises of Murmansk are successfully coping with the processing of an ever-increasing quantity of raw fish from trawling. The Soviet people are again obtaining the famous products of the Baltic Coast canneries -- sprats ("kamprot" and "kil'ka"). The restoration and reconstruction of the fish-processing industries of southern Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands has been successfully accomplished.

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